



VOICELESS VOICES

Message from the President of Global Forum



Padam Bishwokarma

Global Forum Against Caste-based Discrimination (Global Forum) was established in the US in 2014 and works on advocacy and social justice around the world. Global Forum is a team of activists and professionals, who are currently living in the diaspora to provide global solidarity against all forms of discrimination. It has realized the importance to initiate a global action to combat the illicit forms of discrimination. This initiative provides and seeks solidarity in rights-based movement around the globe. It empowers and mobilizes affected communities to establish their human rights and social justice; contributes to the policies and program intervention to the national and international governmental institutions particularly to develop that policy/program in the affected community who are facing the caste-based discrimination.

Global Forum mobilizes internal and external resources to support the campaign against caste-based discrimination related interventions. To achieve its objectives, Global Forum aims to conduct major programs such as policy lobbying through media, research and study; seminar, conference, campaign, and collaboration to eliminate caste-based discrimination. These programs will be implemented by the team of executive board and professionals in collaboration with different national and international organizations.

We would like to request all friends who are living in different countries to join the Forum for social justice, development, and prosperity in Nepal. The caste-based discrimination is not a problem of a certain caste or community – it is the problem of the entire country and our society, which hinders overall development and social growth. Therefore, we must eliminate caste-based discrimination to develop the nation and utilize all its resources. The elimination of discrimination should be initiated by national and international academics, professionals, and activists to come together and contribute toward bringing about justice and equality for Dalits.

We are very delighted to start our quarterly publication Voiceless Voices and its online edition to make the voices of voiceless heard at the national and international arena. Global Forum is committed to enhancing unity among the people in the diaspora by bringing people from different organizations into the mainstream of the movement and finding a common ground to work together to eliminate caste-based discrimination.

Celebration of International Day on Elimination of Racial Discriminations



Voiceless Voices

The Global Forum, DNF, and other sister organizations organized a program in Kathmandu to commemorate the International Day of Elimination of Racial Discrimination. The Prime Minister of Nepal inaugurated the event and delivered his speech as the chief guest in the program. In his address, Prime Minister of Nepal, Mr. Pushpa Kamal Dahal, expressed his profound concern regarding the distressing events in South Africa. He assured the nation that Nepal would not tolerate any form of such violations within its boundaries. He pledged the unwavering commitment of his government in the

relentless pursuit to eradicate racial discrimination.

The Prime Minister's resolute stance reflected the government's strong dedication to fostering an inclusive and harmonious society, where the dignity and rights of every individual are respected. Moreover, he graciously acknowledged and thanked all the organizers, recognizing their significant role in orchestrating the program. Their collective efforts not only brought attention to the cause but also fostered a platform for open dialogue and awareness, fostering a sense of unity and solidarity in the fight against racial discrimination.

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Global Forum Organizes Strategy Development Workshop



Voiceless Voices

A one-day residential Strategy Development Workshop was organized by the Global Forum in Dhulikhel on March 26th, 2023, with the objective of revisiting its previous strategy. The event saw participation from esteemed individuals, including member of House of Represent-

tative (HoR) Mr. Ranendra Barali and member of National Assembly Mr. Bhuban Sunar, leaders from various political parties' sister organizations, representatives from Dalit non-profit organizations, as well as advisors and executive members of the Global Forum. Dr. Man Bahadur BK

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EDITORIAL

Voiceless Voices against Discrimination

Social Change or transformation is an upward social process in course of human civilization. It is a relative matter; it cannot be done in an absolute sense. Society itself being the dynamics it changes the mode of discrimination. The digitalization has not only further fueled such modes but generated new mode of atrocities. It further pressed down the voicelessness of larger population which do not have required access to digital technology. This reveals not only the social poverty but also heavy economic loss for the nation. US Joint Economic Commission has revealed at least 4 percent GDP loss each year due to racial discrimination. In south Asian countries the protracted caste-based discrimination has heavy accumulated national loss since immemorial. Nepal's Human Development Index indicates an overall loss of 25.2 percent due to inequality (NHDR 2020) whereas caste system is the major contributor. There is an estimate that at least ten percent GDP loss each year has been occurred due to such protracted inequality. It is also justified with a research that higher the social inclusion factor (SIF) higher is the productivity of an institution. Reviewing all these papers it has drawn that there has been significant change in the practices of the caste system. Despite this fact caste-based discriminatory practices have been emerged with new mode of discrimination as the neo-liberal atrocity.

Despite Dalits, the most unheard people, are struggling to break such practices Non-Dalits resist the change and put every effort to perpetuate caste system. So, the discourse is needed to explore the resisting mindset of such people -Why they want to perpetuate such system which produces great loss to society, the state and themselves. The 'Voiceless Voices' has been promulgated by the Global Forum Against Caste-based Discrimination to bring such inhuman penalties to the global audience and link it with global movement against discrimination. It will bring out such depressed voices from around the globe since such discrimination has been spread all over the globe due to the displacement and international migration. It will contribute to form a wider international level platform against caste/racial discrimination. Not only that it will enforce with voices to the development agencies and development partners along with UN, WB, ILO like Global Governances to pay special attention to those voices. Without hearing such voices, it is almost impossible to achieve the global targets such as SDG, zero hunger, zero omission, no one left behind etc.

So, the dawn of 'Voiceless Voices' would be an instrumental in combatting discrimination globally. Thanks go to the publishing institution the Global Forum and its officials for deciding to bring it out during its Council meeting. We need to bring our hands together, hold it tightly and raise high forcefully. We will make it laud and heard by the concerned authorities.

ABOUT THE GLOBAL FORUM

Extracted from Strategy Paper

Meeting, Research, Campaign, Solidarity.

- Mobilize the national and international resources to eliminate caste-based discrimination.

Our Governing structure:

The constituent bodies of the forum are the General Convention, Council, Executive committee, Secretariat and Chapters.

Global Convention (GC):

The Forum shall organize the General convention in each 3 years. The major responsibility of general convention is as followings.

- General convention will be the highest body of the Forum. It will formulate new policies and strategies.
- Review the policies of Forum and provide the necessary feedback.
- Provide necessary feedback based on the progress update of every 3 years.
- Elect a new Executive Board through election if required.

The Council (TC)

• The Council will be second largest body as represented all member from different countries. There will be around 25-30 council members elected for council meeting.

- The council meeting will be organizing in every year by Executive Board.
- The council will amend necessary rule, regulation, guidelines and has authority to change executive board.
- The council shall meet at least once a year to review the progress reports shared by EB and develop the Forum's future policies and program.
- Council will form different thematic working group according to its need.
- The council will monitor the activities of EB and provides the necessary feedback. It will approve the annual action plan and budget.
- Council can approve the resignation of any member of EB and fulfill the vacancies in consultation with EB.

Membership:

There will be three types of membership:

- Founder Member: refers to the members who are involved in the initial period of its registration.
- General Member: who accepts the policies, guideline of the Forum can get the general membership of this forum.
- Organizational member - which organization fellow to our mission and willing to take membership can

Take Membership:

- Life member: S/he who has more contribution to the right based movement, or s/he provides financial contribution as indicated by the rules. Executive Board shall have rights to provide the life membership based on qualification of applicants. It will be open to all people for the application of life membership in this forum.

The Executive Board (EB):

General convention will nominate at least

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Caste based discrimination is an elicited form of practice persisting in different parts of the globe. More than 260 million people around the globe especially in south Asia are still suffering from caste-based discrimination. The caste-based discrimination directly impacts to Dalit community, who are often identified as marginalized, historically disadvantaged community, and backward community as it differs by its origin in specific regions or a country. The socio-economic, political, and religious reproduction of caste-based discrimination has resulted Dalit to fall into least developed human category and survive a servitude form of life.

There are several organizations and activists working for the elimination of this sadistic practice, however it has not been effective in its end results. As it is deeply rooted, it requires a blow of national and international action to wipe out discrimination from that society which still practices it. The people from different professions living in overseas realize an importance of global forum to increase the solidarity against discrimination movement globally considering the impacts of multidimensional efforts. As a result, we established Global Forum on 2014. It is registered in United States of America, Colorado.

Our Vision, Mission, Goal and Objectives:

Vision:

Establishment of an equitable society where people can live with dignity

Mission:

Performing role of international network, watchdog on the human right issues, and a campaigner for the empowerment and mainstreaming of Dalit issues.

Goal:

Eliminate the Caste Based Discrimination and other discretionary practices to establish an equitable society.

Objectives:

- Contribute and help through the policies and program intervention to the National and International governmental institutions particularly to develop that policy/program against Caste based Discrimination.
- Provide and seek solidarity on the rights-based movement in global level.
- Empower and mobilize affected community to establish their human rights and social justice.
- Provide humanitarian support to the affected community.
- Identify & mobilize the internal and external resources against the campaign of caste-based discrimination related interventions.

What we do ?

- Advocacy Programs: Policy lobbying through media (print /electronic) and Research and study
- Empowerment: Training, Exposure Visit, Orientation, Seminar, Conference etc.
- Networking & Relation Building: Visit,

CASTE-BASED PRACTICES DECREASED BUT NOT MOMENTUM

Social inclusion and inequality have been the most challenging issues for the modern world and it has been further accelerated due to the COVID-19 pandemic. As per the OXFAM (2022) report the gap between richer and poorer is continued to be widened. Since 1995, the top 1% have captured nearly 20 times more of global wealth than the bottom 50% of humanity. The latest report concludes that ten richest men double their fortunes in pandemic while incomes of 99 percent of humanity fall. Widening economic, gender and racial inequalities are tearing our societies apart due to the neoliberal atrocities and economic violence induced with economic liberalism i.e. capitalism. According to Anthony Giddens (1998) the neo-liberals simply ignored the social problems produced by deregulated markets, which created serious threat to social cohesion. The societies of the developing countries are still heavily engaged in disparity and discrimination based on religion, race, caste, class and ethnicity. In the present context, more than 200 million Dalits of South Asia have been facing economic, social and political violence and discrimination based on caste. The loss of human development due to protracted inequality is huge. Moreover, the cost of the profound inequality we face is in human lives. In *Inequality Kills* methodology notes of OXFAM report (2022) M. Lawson and D. Jacobs state that the inequality contributes to the deaths of at least 21,300 people each day. Every four seconds, inequality contributes to the death of at least one person. This information shows how extent of humanity the inequality is costing for.

Nepali society has been practicing Hindu caste hierarchy since time immemorial. Dalits are at the bottom of such Hindu caste hierarchy who were historically not only excluded but treated as 'untouchable'. Nepali Dalit model itself is an offshoot of the Hindu Indian model that penetrated to Nepal through other Hindu caste with their traditional caste occupations. At the same time, some so-called high caste from Hindu groups also became Dalits over the years as a result of the caste expulsion practiced in the Hindu system until 1963. The 1854 legal code organized caste and ethnic groups into four categories (Brahmin, Kshetri, Vaishya and Shudra) dividing into touchable and untouchable with the differential justice and punishment process based on the Hindu Varna System. Such practices officially continued until promulgation of the new legal code of 1963. However, despite the restoration of the democracy and the constitutional provisions, the discriminatory social practices remained even today in Nepali society. ILO in 2005 revealed that deprived people working overseas continue to experience economic and social discrimination based on the caste even in the diasporas. More than 200 forms

The caste system was a social stratification made by the autocratic rulers to keep their feudal regime intact which is still deep-seated in the society.

of community-practiced types of caste-based discrimination have been identified in Nepal. Thus, they are oppressed in every sector of the life and have been suffering from the 'Caste Penalty' since the time immemorial.

The caste system was a social stratification made by the autocratic rulers to keep their feudal regime intact which is still deep-seated in the society. The prime source of caste-based discrimination is Hindu religion. The Rigveda explained the mythical story of creation; birth of human being from different parts of a body (i.e. the Brahmin emerged from mouth, the Kshatriya from arms, the Vaishya from thighs and the Shudra from feet of a primeval man) which fueled to perpetuate the caste system till the day. Based on this mythical story there are several rulers and pundits who escalated the atrocities over Shudras. Manu was one who created very rigid rules of caste hierarchy system during 300-200 BC. The core of the caste system is ancestry that determines a person's profession and class. In the caste system, not only the labor but also the division of the laborer becomes mandatory. The system entered in Nepal in the Lichchhavi Era (200-979 AD) and was made more rigid during Malla Era. King Jayasthiti Malla (1360-97 AD) invited five Brahmins from India and formulated rules based on 'Manushmriti' introducing severe punishment for those breaking caste hierarchy, which was known as the 'Manab Nyayshastra'. Those who were referred to as untouchable were segregated from mainstream society and they had to live in the outskirts of towns. They were imposed to wear special (bad) looking dresses and ornaments so that others would recognize them easily. The occupations given to Dalits were filthy and undignified. They were even denied to keep lands and other properties. Upon the territorial integration of Nepal, King Prithvi Narayan Shah continued the similar practices stating that he wanted to make Nepal 'Asli Hindusthan'. During the struggle for democracy prior to 1950, a few Dalits sacrificed their lives; resulting in great contribution for the democracy. However, there was no substantial change in the practice of caste system. It was only in 1963 king Mahendra abolished the old civil code and replaced with new one which opened equal legal spaces for Dalits of Nepal.

After the dawn of democracy in 1990, under the constitution of Kingdom of Nepal the legal provision has been introduced to make caste-based discrimination punishable, reservation in the state mechanism and affirmative action in higher



Dr. Man Bahadur BK

education along with the establishment of the National Dalit Commission and Dalit Development Committee. The restored parliament in June 4, 2006 declared Nepal as the "Untouchability free" nation. The present constitution of Nepal has further accelerated the provisions in righteous base.

There has been tremendous change in the political and governing system including over-throwing Panchayat (1960-1990) autocratic regime. We experienced decade long 'People's War' (1996-2006) by the Maoist envisioning to move Nepal towards a more secular republic with commitment to the principles of gender and caste equity. During the war lower ranks of the Maoist army were fulfilled by heavily recruiting Dalits and women. Very few Dalits assumed positions of authority in the decision-making level in the insurgency. The militarization during the conflict had exacerbated caste dynamics, resulting abuses against Dalits. The rights against untouchability and caste-based discrimination as the fundamental rights have been institutionalized in the constitution of Nepal that was promulgated through the Constitutional Assembly, the first time in Nepal, in 2012. The constitution has also ensured the participation in state mechanism on the principle of proportionate inclusion. Despite these changes over time, there is hardly two percent Dalits in civil services. Dalits are still struggling against domination not only in private sphere but largely with the state.

In this situation, last year some prominent scholars undertook four studies to see the changes in caste system over the time. All four studies have almost observed the similar caste practices but with different places and informants i.e. freedom in selecting occupation, access to and discrimination in schools, status of property ownership, inter-dining with other caste-people, status of inter-caste marriage, untouchability/commensality, affiliation in the institutional networks. I got an opportunity to review all these studies that I am presenting briefly as follows.

A prominent scholar and activist Dhan Kumari Sunar had presented the overall situation of Dalit community with some facts and data along with some constitutional and legal provisions. Her study revealed that despite no formal denial in the choice of occupation thirty-five percent

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have chosen their own traditional profession. There is only five percent inter-caste marriage which is taken as a tool for social fusion among Dalits and non-Dalits. But the study explored that the couples are either in rented-room or turned themselves into the Christianity. Property ownership is moderately less, around thirty-three respondents have their own house throughout their life-period. The social relationship such as co-feast is still weak since merely around one third has experienced having food together with non-Dalits. The study revealed that the practices of untouchability and discrimination has decreased to some extent. However, Dalits still experience misbehave and delay in their work by the government officials once they know that the service-seeker is a Dalit. The conclusion she derived is the caste system is a unique problem in Nepali society, has been certainly decreased in comparison to the past but it has not taken the momentum as required.

Dr. Madhu Giri, the associate professor in Tribhuvan University, overviewed the Weberian concept that caste belongs to the realm of status as opposed to class. Weber argued that caste was rigid and undynamic, hence the term "close system of stratification," whereas class was referred to as "open system". Likewise, he also referred the conclusion of Louis Dumont that the elementary structure of the caste system was based on the purity ideology prescribed in the Hindu epics. The primary aspect is hierarchy; by which the pure is superior to the impure. Referring to Dor Bahadur Bista, a well-known anthropologist, he argued that the fatalistic ideology of the caste system was the main obstacle to the cultural change and economic development of the Nepali society. Furthermore, he claimed referring to Bista that the caste system which was very static in nature perpetuated fatalistic practices and promoted nepotism and other unproductive practices like Chakari.

Dr. Giri has observed the similar aspects of Dalits' life in Terai-Madhesh. The study revealed that caste-based difficulties in accessing education have dramatically changed over the period of around thirty years, though narratives of exclusion continue. The economic status of an individual family or a person makes a significant difference in untouchability and discrimination in the everyday life. In term of property ownership their own private land for home increased to 38 percent from ten percent and own private agriculture land to 20 percent from 5 percent in some 30 years' period. The study revealed that inter-dining practices have changed but the Caste Panchayat (Jat Samaj), even today, fines if caste codes are publicly violated, Terai caste groups are much more conscious of purity and pollution during rituals. Dr. Giri mentioned that there is no space for caste moving upward in the Hindu Caste System. It can only change the rigidity in caste practices. The caste has been embedded with the generation/hereditary.

Dr. Madhusudan Subedi studies on transformation of Jat-based features in urban areas and revealed that the class system as a

new social structure is receiving more preferences in Nepal because of changes in the economic structure. The economic and social transformations have changed people's lives and livelihoods, and Jat-based relations more broadly. Livelihood diversification, prioritization for education, health facility to the citizens, democratization of the micro and macro institutions and media access have played a crucial role in generating new values and practices in the traditional Jat-based society. However, he agrees that due to discrimination and exclusion exercised by the state in the past, Dalits are still socially, economically and politically marginalized as compared to non-Dalits.

Likewise, Dr. Khagendra Prasai, a well-known scholar on Marxism, underwent through a study to investigate the current status of caste in Nepal and concludes that the caste-based practices in Nepal are transforming substantially and perceptibly enough in all its constitutive elements, though in different speeds—some faster while other slower. However, he has not mentioned whether some changes in few practices undertaken in his research reflects the overall emancipation of Dalits. He neither mentioned how can remaining part of the practices including new modes of discrimination that the Hindu Varna system is reproducing be diluted.

The studies tried to justify that there would be an upward-caste mobility once there is economic transformation but since the caste system is embedded with genetic birth there is no room for upward caste mobility. As Weber opined, it is undynamic close system of stratification. So, there can be change in some sort of position in the society but not upward caste mobility. The study revealed some rigid institutions even today like Jat Samaj in Terai-Madhesh, Ghuthi in Newar community. There are some more formal/informal such institutions and some are emerging in the society. Therefore, until and unless there is the caste system, it reproduces discriminatory atrocities in a new form. It is fueled with neo-liberal global policy and the existing social/state policies. Crony economy in the name of capitalism has been the major factor keeping knot of the discrimination in a dynamic form. It is widely accepted

assumption that democracy protects people from extreme injustices. However, the conventional democracy 'winner takes all' principle has created and widened the disparity among human beings. In modern era democracy is not merely the freedom, but it should bring emancipatory shift substantially in the wellbeing of all human lives in an equal footing, i.e. Transformative democracy. It helps to overcome inequalities and structural disadvantages, and to empower weaker actors of the society. Transformation without emancipation does not build egalitarian society. So, the transformation should be judged not through few conventional practices rather through the big spectrum of power-sharing, cultural revolution, societal transformation and the attitude of the nation. For the emancipatory shift in the society, like 'Critical Race Theory' and 'Teach the Truth' in the USA, we need to integrate 'Critical Ethno-/Caste Theory' and 'Native Science' in our education system from the very beginning; i.e. basic level to higher education.

Even though the Constitution of Nepal directs for socialism-oriented economy with no discrimination there is no such policies and practices undertaken to reset the economy as well as the society. Neither following the existing global policies brings any expected emancipatory shifts in the society. So, the welfare system should be restructured in an innovative way, 'Protective Liberalism (Pro-liberalism)' in place of neo-liberalism which embedded with the principle of protectionism to the deprived ones under the political spectrum of 'Liberal Socialism'. Egalitarian society from bottom to top is the basic part of the pro-liberalism, and liberal socialism is the pathway to break the caste system that our constitution and the contemporary human rights movements direct for.

(Dr. BK, Fulbright Postdoc Scholar at Brandeis University, the USA for 2016/17, is author of several books including "Eradicating Hunger: Rebuilding Food Regime". He is the President of Native Arts and Heritage Academy Nepal, the Professor of economics and now Academic Dean for Madhesh University. He is the former Secretary for Government of Nepal)



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for publishing Quarterly Bulletin!

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We wish all the best and success of the Bulletin.

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Celebration of International ...

Overall, the Prime Minister's speech exemplified the gravity of the issue at hand and conveyed a clear message of determination and collaboration in the pursuit of a more just and inclusive society for Nepal. More than 600 people participated in the program, including various political leaders and presidents/representatives of sister organizations. They shared their thoughts about the tragic incident that took place in South Africa, resulting in the loss of 69 lives. Nepal, steadfast in its commitment to human rights and equality, unequivocally rejects any form of such violations and aspires to prevent any such occurrences in the future.

On the occasion, phone ringtones were set up with discouraging messages against racial discrimination and untouchability. Every citizen who answered phone calls received such messages, contributing to the widespread dissemination of the message of harmony and unity across the nation.

Formation of Global Forum's Advisory Committee

A six-member advisor's committee has been formed for the Global Forum. The nominated advisors are as follows: Dr. Man Bahadur BK (retired Secretary of the Government of Nepal), Dr. Bishnu Maya Pariyar (Social Activist of USA), Mr. Padam Sundas (past ambassador of Nepal), Dr. Drona Rasaily (Community leader, Canada), Dr. Nirmal Bishwakarma (past ambassador of Nepal), and Dr. Harry Bhandari (Delegate, Maryland Legislator).

The decision to nominate these advisors was made during a meeting held on August 7th, 2022.

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Global Forum ...

and Dr. Nirmal Bishwakarma, both advisors to the Global Forum, facilitated the program.

During the workshop, participants provided valuable suggestions for both the long-term and short-term strategies of the Global Forum. Additionally, Padam Bishwokarma, the President of the Global Forum, Moti Lal Nepali, the Senior Vice President, and Mr. Tirtha Barma, the Immediate President, shared the organization's mission, vision, objectives, activities, and achievements.

Mr. Sushil BK, the Secretary, skillfully concluded the workshop by summarizing

Global Forum's Executive members participation on Ambedkar 175th anniversary



Voiceless Voices

Dr. Bishnu Maya Pariyar, Advisor, Mr. Padam Bishwokarma, President, and Mrs. Anita Pariyar, Treasurer, participated in the 175th anniversary of Ambedkar on April 14th, 2023, at the United Nations Building in New York, hosted by the Ambedkar International Mission. The event was graced by the presence of the Indian Ambassador to the United States, UN representatives, the US Ambassador to India, and various other esteemed representatives who shared their contributions to the nation.

During this momentous occasion, Mr. Bishwokarma and Mrs. Pariyar took the opportunity to discuss and present the mission, vision, and objectives of the organization to the program's attendees and representatives.

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About ...

13 members as Executive Board (EB) for its first three-year term. The EB has following responsibilities.

- Implement the approved policies and program.
- Monitoring the human right violation and provide the feedback to international bodies / government, and related stakeholder.
- Organize advocacy activities to safeguard the rights of disadvantaged community in affected countries.
- Take initiation for fundraising for Forum's activities.
- Extend the Forum's network to the related stakeholders particularly to eliminate the caste based discrimination.
- Develop and implement the internal administrative policies, good governance strategy and guideline.
- Organize meeting at least twice a year. EB can make a secretariat for day-to-day function and provide some authorities to secretariat.
- Manage its secretariat, appoint the necessary staff, and mobilize them.

Our Chapters

The Chapters are established globally. Our Chapters in Nepal, Japan and other countries They have following responsibilities.

- Implement Global Forum policies and program locally.
- Mobilizes and coordinate local members to unite caste-based discrimination in local level.
- The chapters will perform Global Forum's local level activities within organization Vision, Mission, Goal and Objectives.
- The Chapters will perform Forum's network to the related stakeholders particularly to eliminate the caste based discrimination.

Nepal Chapter General Assembly

Voiceless Voices

The Third General Assembly of Global Forum Nepal Chapter was recently completed on June 18th, 2023. The opening ceremony was inaugurated by the Honorable Chairman of National Dalit Commission, Mr. Dev Raj Bishwokarma.

During the assembly, various esteemed individuals, including Mr. Manohar Paodel, Chairman of Mukti Samaj; Mr. Parshu Ram Ramtel, Chairman of Mukti Morcha; Mr. Ganesh BK, Chairman of Mukti Sangathan; leaders of civil societies; leaders of political organization sister societies; and executive members from Global Forum's Center committees, conveyed their greetings and messages.

Moreover, the election committee announced the formation of a nine-member executive committee, led by Mr. Sangam Gahatraj. The newly elected executive members of the Global Forum, Nepal Chapter, include Mrs. Durga Pariyar, Mr. Govinda BK, Mrs. Kalpana Baral, Mrs. Pampha Pariyar, Mr. Rajesh Nepali, Mr. Bishwanath Bishwokarma, Mr. Bhakta Darnal, and Ms. Kalpana Ramdam.

The General Assembly served as a significant platform for fostering collaboration, exchange of ideas, and the election of dedicated individuals to lead and represent the Global Forum's Nepal Chapter, in their mission to advocate for the rights and upliftment of marginalized communities.

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DALIT RELATED RESOLUTION MOTION IN NEPAL: PROSPECT TO PROSPERITY

Introduction

The establishment of caste-based hierarchies and the classification of individuals based on their caste identity has historically led to social, economic, political, and legal discrimination and marginalization of the Dalit community. This discrimination and oppression based on caste are evident in various incidents and events in Nepali society even today. Religion, as depicted in religious scriptures and historical texts, has been a source of discrimination against Dalits. For example, the Manu-Smriti, which was incorporated into the Muluki Ain (National Code) in 1910 BS, perpetuated such discrimination.

To address the deep-rooted discrimination and unequal treatment faced by the Dalit community, modern state systems have been working on constitutional, legal, institutional, and structural reforms. The Nepali constitution guarantees rights, including the establishment of the National Dalit Commission, which defines Dalits as "a community historically oppressed and marginalized by the state's main course of action, based on traditional religious beliefs of untouchability and by being excluded from economic, social, political, educational, and cultural participation and contributions through various means, including labor, seep (manual scavenging), and art". The democratically elected representative parliament, with the power of the people, directs and suggests the government and relevant parties on matters related to the country, the people, their livelihoods, issues, and questions. Provided directives and suggestions through various means and methods should be the responsibility of the concerned authorities to be fulfilled. The Resolution Motion is one of the widely used instrument to make the government and the concerned authority responsible towards the matters included in the proposed resolution motion. In general, most of the honorable members of the parliament, through consensus or unanimous agreement, pass "Resolution Motion" for implementation by both houses of the Federal Parliament, the use of Representatives, and the National Assembly. The Resolution Motion related to Dalit and their issues was registered in National Assembly on 06 February 2023, and it was tabled and discussed at National Assembly by honorable Bhuban Bahdur with the support of other 17 honorable members of National Assembly.

On March 22, 2023, the Resolution Motion (attached herewith) on "Eliminating widespread discrimination and oppression in the Dalit community and ensuring social-cultural, economic, and political equality, prosperity, and social justice" was passed unanimously by the National Assembly, providing direction to the Nepali government for implementation. Additionally, the subject-wise committees of the National Assembly continually monitor and

evaluate matters mentioned in the motion, and they provide directions to the government and its implementation functionaries. This public and essential motion is a general resolution for addressing the issues face by the Dalit community in Nepal, which needs a concrete plan for implementation and the strong commitment from the government and the concerned political parties as well. It is expected that a successful implementation of this motion is a prospect to the prosperity that Nepal is longing for a long.

The Existing provision and situation regarding Dalit community

In the mythological era governed by religion, the National Code of 1910 (BS), which was influenced by religious scriptures, enforced a strict caste-based system on the Dalit community. After nearly ninety years since the enactment of the Muluki Ain (National Code) 1910 (BS), the new Muluki Ain of 2020 (BS) established provisions to penalize caste-based discrimination and untouchability. Additionally, the Constitution of 1990 (AD) also defined caste-based discrimination and untouchability as punishable offenses. Subsequently, the Interim Constitution of 2007 (AD) and the current Constitution have also introduced various measures to put an end to caste-based discrimination, injustice, untouchability, and division. However, it is not yet evident that these provisions have been effectively implemented to bring about tangible changes in society.

In the mythological era governed by religion, the National Code of 1910 (BS), which was influenced by religious scriptures, enforced a strict caste-based system on the Dalit community.

In case of existing provisions for Dalit Community in Nepal, the constitution of Nepal, promulgated under the Constituent Assembly, along with its preamble, fundamental rights, state policies, and guiding principles, has made significant progress in safeguarding the rights of Dalits compared to the past. Article 18 of the Constitution enshrines the right to equality, Article 24 prohibits caste-based discrimination and untouchability, Article 40 guarantees the rights of Dalits, Article 42 ensures social justice, and Article 255 establishes the National Dalit Commission to empower the Dalit community, eliminate caste-based discrimination and untouchability, and ensure proportional inclusive representation in all state bodies and political representation.

However, despite the existence of laws for implementation, the prevailing social practices and attitudes regarding Dalits make it difficult to effectively enforce the provisions outlined in the constitution. The National Day Against



PREM KUMAR RASAILI

UNDER SECRETARY

FEDERAL PARLIAMENT SECRETARIAT,

FEDERAL PARLIAMENT OF NEPAL

Caste-based Discrimination and Untouchability, along with the Caste-Based Discrimination and Untouchability (Offense and Punishment) Act, 2068 BS, which criminalizes 12 forms of caste-based discrimination and untouchability, are steps taken after the declaration of Nepal as a caste-based discrimination-free nation. Nevertheless, the addition of "Other Social Discrimination and Untouchability" to the Act and the provisions of punishment ranging from three months to three years of imprisonment and fines between fifty thousand to two lakhs for this offense have yet to be fully implemented, and the existing provisions have not been able to eradicate such practices completely.

Similarly, various other laws related to the civil service, the Judicial Service Commission Act 2073, the Judicial Council Act 2073, Security Services (Nepal Police, Armed Police Force, and Nepal Army), corporations and public enterprises act and regulations, teacher service regulations 2057, university-related acts, and their respective regulations, have provisions for providing 9% to 15% representation of Dalits in state bodies. However, the enactment of a unified law for the effective implementation of the fundamental rights of Dalits in all these areas is still lacking. Despite the formulation of 16 laws for the implementation of the fundamental rights enshrined in the constitution, there is no comprehensive legal framework to address the overall problems faced by Dalits. Even though the Fifteenth Plan (Fiscal Year 2076/77-2080/81 BS) did not include specific programs for Dalits, but prioritize the efforts to provide land and housing for Dalits and prioritize education, health, drinking water, employment, preconditions development, and community forest management need to be centralized through policy and planning to identify and address the comprehensive issues faced by the Dalit community. Similarly, Dalits have not been prioritized in other sectoral policies.

The given text highlights the progress made in Nepal to safeguard the rights of Dalits through constitutional provisions and laws, but it also points out the challenges in implementing these provisions effectively due to prevailing social attitudes and the need for comprehensive policy and planning to address the overall issues faced by the Dalit community.

Nepal's constitution has provisions for the establishment of various commis-

sions as institutional provision, including the Dalit Commission, under the category of constitutional commissions. The Dalit Commission is tasked with conducting research and making recommendations to address issues related to caste-based discrimination and untouchability. However, due to the lack of authority to plan, investigate such issues file the case in court, the effectiveness of its work has not been as expected.

Similarly, though committees like the Neglected, Oppressed, and Dalit Upliftment and Development Committee (uepekchhit, utpidit, Dalit Barga Uthan Samiti), Dalit Development Committee (Dalit Bikas Samiti at Madhes Province), Badi Development Committee (Badi Biksa Samiti), and Backward Class Development Committee (Pichhada Barga Bikas Samiti) have been established, they have not been able to function effectively to prioritize and resolve Dalit issues.

In terms of representation in state institutions, Dalits have only 2.5% representation in the Civil Service, while it is approximately 9.5% in the Police Force, 8.4% in the Army, and 1% in the Judiciary. Even in higher-ranking positions, the presence of Dalits is

While talking to current Situation of the Dalit Community, the Dalit population in Nepal stands at around 13.6%, whereas it was 13.8% in the 2068 BS census. Approximately 40% of Dalits are landless. Among the entire impoverished population in Nepal, around 42% are from the Dalit community. The average annual income of Nepalis is NPR 88,785, but for Dalits, it is even lower, with around NPR 34,187.

As per the Human Development Index of 2019, which considers factors like life expectancy, access to education, and standard of living, the overall situation of Nepal was 0.587. However, the Dalit community's HDI is much lower. Looking at education, Nepal's literacy rate is 59%, whereas only about 49% of Dalits are literate. Furthermore, among those who manage to attend schools, only 1.6% pass the university entrance exams.

Regarding healthcare, approximately 28% of pregnant Dalit women have access to iron supplements and receive postnatal care from health institutions. However, for 57% of Dalit families, there is no access to family planning facilities, and only 35% can afford health treatment.

In terms of representation in state institutions, Dalits have only 2.5% representation in the civil service, while it is approximately 9.5% in the police force, 8.4% in the army, and 1% in the judiciary. Even in higher-ranking positions, the presence of Dalits is significantly lower. Looking at political representation, currently, only 5.82% of the members in the parliament are Dalits, and 0.36% in the previous elections were elected representatives from the Dalit community. Although there have been some

improvements in Dalit representation at the provincial and local levels, these numbers are still far from satisfactory.

These statistics show that despite some progress, there is still much work to be done to ensure the full inclusion and empowerment of the Dalit community in various aspects of society. To solve these gaps and lacks among the Dalit community, a comprehensive policy was long needed, and it is expected that the Resolution Motion (related to Dalit) will do so. The data related to this section is compiled from the different sources.

The Reason behind introducing the Resolution Motion (Dalit related)

In the above given context of Dalit community in Nepal, the main reason to pass this resolution motion is the incomplete and inadequate implementation of existing policies, laws, institutional, and structural mechanisms related to the Dalits. Most importantly, the purpose behind introducing the Dalits related Resolution Motion in National Assembly are as follows:

- To address the issues related to the Dalit community systematically and implement them through the state machinery according to the provisions of the constitution, various periodic/regional policies, laws, and this document,

- To bring necessary improvements in the organizational structure of the institutions established for addressing Dalit issues and add other essential institutional structures,

- To ensure the representation and access of Dalits in every state mechanism, to eradicate caste-based discrimination and bias and contribute to building an inclusive nation

- To prioritize the Dalit community's social-economic development and upliftment and highlight them in the Human Development Index of the entire country, thereby making positive improvements,

- To extend the resources of the state towards the growth of Dalit community's access to justice and address widespread poverty, inequality, and injustice prevalent in the country,

- To facilitate, coordinate, collaborate, and expedite the actions taken by the Government of Nepal, the judiciary, and the administration concerning Dalit issues,

- To make all the responsible stakeholders aware, sensitive, positive, and accountable in the matters related to Dalits, and jointly formulate common concepts, goals, and objectives,

- To implement the agreements and treaties related to the issues of caste-based discrimination, human rights violations, state-protected violence, and other injustices swiftly, enhancing Nepal's image in the global community,

By addressing these issues/purposes and implementing the resolution motion, it is expected to establish Nepal as a country that is committed to and sensitive towards the issues faced by the Dalit community. It will also help to show a positive image of Nepal in the international community and make the political parties accountable and responsible for addressing the issues of

To bring necessary reforms, improvements, and new constructions in the policy, legal, institutional, and structural systems concerning the matters addressed in the resolution

caste-based discrimination and other forms of injustice among Dalit community in Nepal

After the National Assembly passes the resolution, it is sent to the Nepal Government for implementation. Subsequently, the Development and Good Governance (SDGG) Committee of national Assembly formed the Implementation and Monitoring Sub-committee under the leadership of Honorable Bhuvan Bahadur Sunar, which has been preparing the background for the implementation of resolution motion. The same sub-committee formed a working group for the preparation of the draft, and it made decisions regarding the development of the Implementation Action Plan for this motion. The sub-committee engaged in discussions, interactions, and consultations with various for the preparation of the draft. This subcommittee has already drafted consulting with stakeholders at different stages, and submitted the Implementation Action Plan of the resolution Motion to the (SDGG). The implementation Action Plan has visioned "to empower the Dalit community and make them strong, with proportional and inclusive representation in the state's mechanisms, and to contribute to the creation of a prosperous and socially just nation, free from caste-based discrimination and prejudice," and the mission is "to collaborate in the construction of a prosperous nation by effectively implementing the provisions mentioned in Nepal's Constitution, policies, laws, and resolutions". The goals of the Implementation Action Plan are:

- To implement the 19 provisions outlined in the Dalit-related resolution passed by the National Assembly in a systematic manner,

- To bring necessary reforms, improvements, and new constructions in the policy, legal, institutional, and structural systems concerning the matters addressed in the resolution,

- To ensure the acquisition and utilization of social, political, and economic rights and make positive changes in the standard of living of the Dalit community,

- To coordinate, monitor, and evaluate the progress in areas where the provisions mentioned in the resolution have been implemented or are yet to be implemented."

Constitutional amendment and consolidation, policy and legal reforms, institutional, structural, and procedural improvements, policy, budget, and programmatic enhancements, empowerment, and awareness, and implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of various subject areas are incorporated into a comprehensive matrix called the Log Frame to formulate and implement this action plan. The this action plan, after thorough review by the Implementation Evaluation Sub-Committee and the Development and

Good Governance Committee along with extensive deliberations and further refinement in consultation with officials and employees holding positions in the ministries., will be presented to the Government of Nepal, Council of Ministers (Cabinet) for approval, and after passing from the cabinet, it is expected to be implemented through the respective ministries and commissions. In the history of Dalit right movement, this Dalit related Resolution motion with its institutional and policy works has created tremendous opportunity to make the positive changes in the lives of Dalit community in Nepal

Conclusion

The Resolution Motion marks the initiation of a new endeavor concerning the holistic development of the Dalit community in Nepal. According to its plan, if executed effectively, it can lead to the recognition, access, and representation of the Dalit community in every state institution in a just manner, which can bring positive improvements in the lives of the people belonging to the Dalit community. While policy and planning alone may not bring about significant changes, it is essential for the Nepalese government and other concerned stakeholders to work collaboratively with commitment, support, and a positive mindset to bring the desired transformation among the people in Dalit community, while Dalit related Resolution Motion is a prospect to prosperity in Nepal. ■ ■ ■

Condolence Letter Submitted to the Prime Minister of Nepal



Voiceless Voices

A condolence letter from the Global Forum has been submitted to the Prime Minister of Nepal, Mr. Pushpa Kamal Dahal, expressing heartfelt condolences on the recent passing of his wife, Mrs. Sita Dahal.

A group of members, including Dr. Man Bahadur BK, Advisor; Mr. Tirtha Barma, Immediate Past President; Mr. Moti Lal Nepali, Senior Vice President; and other members, presented the condolence letter to the Prime Minister at his residence in Baluwatar, Kathmandu. The team expressed their profound sadness and heartfelt condolences on the

Interaction Program Completed

Voiceless Voices

An interaction program was organized on June 4th, 2023, to mark the 17th anniversary of Nepal's announcement against untouchability, discussing the challenges in its implementation and potential solutions. The distinguished Chief Guest of the program was Mr. Top Bahadur Magar, Chair of the National Human Rights Commission.

Several esteemed speakers contributed to the event, including Mr. Bhuban Sunar, Member of National Assembly; Mr. Shambhu Hajara, President of Nepal Dalit Sangh; Mr. Ganesh Bishwokarma, President of Nepal Dalit Mukti Sangathan; Dr. Bishnu Maya Pariyar, Advisor to the Global Forum; and Mr. Rajendra Century, President of NASO, USA. Each of them raised their voices on the issue of the nation's negligence in implementing the announcement against untouchability and the challenges faced in implementing the proposed solutions.

The program was skillfully chaired by Mr. Padam Bishwokarma, the President, and conducted by Mr. Amrit Bishwakarma, the General Secretary. Mr. Moti Lal Nepali, Senior Vice President, warmly welcomed the guests, while Mr. Tirtha Barma, the Immediate Past President, highlighted the crucial issues at hand.

Utilizing Zoom as a platform, the program witnessed active participation from attendees all around the world, making it a truly global discussion on the pressing matter of untouchability and its impact on Nepalese society. The event proved to be an enlightening and engaging forum for dialogue, aiming to propel positive change and greater understanding towards eradicating the remnants of untouchability and promoting equality in Nepal.

Congratulations to Global Forum
for publishing Quarterly Bulletin!

VOICELESS VOICES

We wish all the best and success of the Bulletin.

**Everest Himalaya LLC,
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